



Summer intern Brittany Rynsburger in the Congressman's Visalia Office.

What the Government Can Do For You

Guest Editorial by Brittany Rynsburger

When an experience overwhelmingly exceeds your expectations, you know it was worth your time and effort. That is how I feel after having completed my internship with Congressman Nunes.

The most important thing that I took from this experience is that the positive impact our government has on the lives of folks is highly underrated and often unnoticed. When one hears that their congressman can help them solve their problems with any federal agency, they probably would not think much of it. They say of course congressmen exist to represent the needs of their respective districts in Washington, D.C., but in the midst of greater issues like the War in Iraq or reducing the federal deficit, does one person's problem really matter to his or her congressman?

The only answer I can honestly give you after my time as an intern is **yes it does**. During my summer internship, I had the privilege of assisting with casework, which is the term used to describe the process where the Congressman contacts a federal agency on the behalf of a constituent to resolve an issue, and what I gained from that is more useful and rewarding than any other summer job I could've taken. The staff at Congressman Nunes' office is committed to assisting constituents with the hundreds of problems they contact them about, whether it be with immigration problems, receiving their social security checks, making sure their mail is delivered or awarding a Veteran with medals. With a little patience, most every case is solved favorably. And solving an issue that means the world to a constituent is rewarding to staff as well.

I could go on and on about the seemingly impossible things that Congressman Nunes' office has done for his constituents, but it's not just the casework. It's showing up at local events and supporting the community in endeavors that are important to them. It's showing compassion to people in the district that make this office more than just a legislative engine. With all of the negativity surrounding politics these days, I wish everyone could intern in their congressman's office. They really are here to serve the people and what better way to truly understand it than to see it personally. I am so grateful that I was able to have had this opportunity.

Congress Passes Pension Bill

The Republican led Congress made a commitment to take proactive steps to protect and strengthen America's retirement system. This commitment meant that Congress had to take a long look at the mis-managed pension systems set up by companies that were not following through on the promises they made to employees. To reform this broken system, Congress recently enacted H.R. 4, the Pension Protection Act. The measure fixes outdated pension rules to help ensure employers properly and adequately fund their worker pension plans, provide meaningful new disclosure to workers about the status of their pension plan, protect taxpayers from a possible multi-billion dollar taxpayer bailout, and make

common sense modifications to encourage greater personal savings for retirement and other needs.

The Pension Protection Act also includes a number of provisions that encourage charitable donations. For example, folks can now make tax-free deductions from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) to charities, businesses can deduct the value of food donations from their taxes, and blood donation centers can now write off the fuel costs of transporting and collecting blood.

Furthermore, a bill co-sponsored by Congressman Nunes - H.R. 5424 - which would allow Mennonite church employees to receive the benefits they have

been offered for more than 40 years was successfully included in the final version of the bill.

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA), an organization affiliated with the Mennonite Church, has provided socially-conscious investment and retirement options to church employees for more than 40 years. Among the benefits is an annuity retirement benefit for church employees. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recently interpreted a 2002 law as having ended the ability of MMA to operate this type of plan. Other churches operating similar plans were permitted to continue their retirement programs as well.

Quick Facts

Rep. Devin Nunes maintains two offices in the 21st Congressional District to serve the needs of his constituents. His main office is in Visalia at 113 N. Church St., Suite 208. The telephone number is 733-3861.

His Fresno County office is in Clovis at 264 Clovis Ave., Suite 206. The telephone number is 323-5528.